United Nations S/PV.4662

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4662nd meeting

Thursday, 12 December 2002, 11.55 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Valdivieso	(Colombia)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Yakimov
	Cameroon	Mr. Tidjani
	China	Mr. Chen Xu
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Guinea	Mr. Boubacar Diallo
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Mauritius	Mrs. Huree-Agarwal
	Mexico	Ms. Anguiano Rodríguez
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Singapore	Mr. Yap
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Atieh
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Harrison
	United States of America	Ms. Connelly

Agenda

The situation in Croatia

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (S/2002/1341).

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02-73428 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.55 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Croatia

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (S/2002/1341)

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Croatia in which she requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Ognjanovac (Croatia) took a seat at the Council table.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Guéhenno to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2002/1341, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (UNMOP).

Members of the Council also have before them photocopies of a letter dated 10 December 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Yugoslavia and the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Croatia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting the Protocol between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Croatia on the Interim Regime along the Southern Border between the Two States signed on 10 December 2002 by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia and Croatia. That letter and its annex will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2002/1348.

At this meeting the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to whom I now give the floor.

Mr. Guéhenno: This is the last time I shall have the honour to introduce a report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (UNMOP). The present report (S/2002/1341) summarizes the developments on Prevlaka until 10 December 2002, and as you noted, Sir, on that date — to our great pleasure — the Governments of Croatia and of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia signed the Protocol on the Interim Regime along the Southern Border between the Two States. That was, without any doubt, a significant step forward by the two countries on their way to full normalization of their relations. For us at the United Nations, it means that the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka, which monitored the demilitarization of the Prevlaka peninsula, can withdraw with confidence that their work has been successfully accomplished.

That task, worthwhile in itself, had two major effects. It helped to insulate the strategically important peninsula from the fighting and tensions in the vicinity, and it later created conditions conducive to negotiations by the parties on a settlement of the dispute.

The signing of the Protocol paved the way for a smooth and orderly handover of the UNMOP area of responsibility to the local authorities. An expert team from Croatia is already on the peninsula to work with UNMOP on the technical aspects of the handover of the former naval base and its lighthouse, which incidentally has been maintained and run by UNMOP military observers for the last 10 years. To the best of my knowledge it is the first lighthouse ever to be operated by the United Nations.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has also nominated personnel for conducting the handover on its side. Therefore, UNMOP has started the repatriation of its personnel and by today, 12 December, the Mission is down to about 10 military observers. Starting on 15 December, most of them will also be repatriated, and only three military observers will be left, to be available for about another week to liaise with the representatives of the two sides to ensure that the handover is completed in a secure and effective manner.

In conclusion, I would like to put on record our appreciation for those 25 Governments, from all five continents, which contributed to this truly international mission. This spirit of internationalism was also reflected by the successive Chief Military Observers of UNMOP who came, in the best United Nations tradition, from all corners of the globe: Colonel Tangai from Kenya, Colonel Williams from New Zealand and Colonel Mujica from Argentina. They and the men and women who served under them, deserve our thanks.

The end of the UNMOP mandate brings to a close, not only a decade of United Nations involvement in that part of the Balkans, but also a mission which demonstrated, as the Secretary-General stated in his report, that "even a small United Nations presence, properly conceived and executed, can make a difference" *(S/2002/1341, para. 12)*.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: I thank Mr. Guehenno for his briefing and for the way in which he stressed the importance of this occasion: the completion of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka.

Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council welcomes the Protocol signed by the Government of Croatia and the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on 10 December 2002, establishing a provisional cross-border regime on the Prevlaka peninsula, as referred to in the letter from their permanent representatives dated 10 December 2002 (S/2002/1348). The Protocol represents a further step forward in the process of strengthening of confidence and good-neighbourly relations between both countries. The Council welcomes the commitment of both Governments to continue negotiations on Prevlaka with a view to amicably resolving all outstanding issues, and commends their diplomatic efforts to bolster peace and stability in the region.

"The Council commends the important role played by the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (UNMOP) in helping to create conditions conducive to a negotiated settlement of the dispute. The Council takes this opportunity to express its appreciation for the efforts of all UNMOP personnel, past and present, and its gratitude to those countries that contributed personnel or other resources in the successful completion of its mandate."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2002/34.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.